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CURRENT EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE

Education Not a Science. By J. M. D. MEIKLEJOHN. Journal of Education, London, March, 1894.

The strongest educative powers given to man are Religion, Literature, Art, and Politics. Now, religion may be treated historically, but it cannot, in my conviction, be treated scientifically: the feelings that belong to it lie deeper and rise higher than any scientific observation can go, and they are so intimately entwined with that unknown and unknowable element called personality that you cannot, under any circumstances, inquire fully into them. "It is higher than heaven, what canst thou know? It is deeper than hell, what canst thou do?"

Literature is another educative force which cannot be handled scientifically. It is true that there are parts of it, territories lying on its outskirts, that can be explored in a scientific fashion. For example, the scientific inductions that have been made of Shakespeare's rhymes have enabled scholars to set the plays in their proper chronological order.

But a false application of science to literature is to be seen in a book lately published in connection with the University Extension movement. In that astonishing work we have the history of English literature mapped out into the "Sympathetic Age", the "Sententious Age", the "Age of Gaiety", the "Serious Age", and so on; and we have diagrams to show how the Romantic Drama in England was built up in cubes and parallelograms; other diagrams to show how the faculty of Pope developed from F to M into S (F=Fancy, M=Moralizing, S=Satire); and another to show how Sir Walter Scott consists of exactly equal parts of "the Dramatic, the Humorous, and the Psychological". Scientific physiologists tell us that poetry is a secretion of the smaller intestines; but no scientific physiologist has ever gone so far as the author of this book in showing how authors or periods are built up or manufactured. This is not life; it is not criticism; it is the putrescence of "scientific method." One might address it in the words of De Musset: "Tout est grand; tout est beau; mais on meurt dans votre air."

The spirit of literature is just the spirit of the highest human life; and the problem how to introduce the great wealth of our own literature to the masses of the young in our schools is a problem of the highest educational importance, which can receive no aid from scientific inquiries or scientific considerations. *To make the masses in our English schools genuinely fond of the best literature, is a problem to be solved not on scientific lines, but in a quite simple and practical way, that is, by introducing to schools as teachers men and women who are themselves fond of the best in our literature.*

Education is not a science. It is something much better; it is an art. Now, if you will look into the relation of art to science, you will find that no art possessed by man gets any aid from science, except on its outermost borders. For example, the art of painting receives aid from science in its endeavour to find out what are the most lasting pigments; but it cannot train artists in the selection of colours. That is a part of his profession which the artist must himself learn by living and loving observation, by comparison, by discussion with his brother artists; and I think that this analogy gives the relation of psychology to education. Psychology, that is, the psychology of the growing mind, does help the teacher in his conduct of the earlier years of instruction. But it can carry the teacher only up to a certain point; and, as soon as the learner begins the study of a subject, such as language, history, or a literary work, the guiding clue of psychology is given up, and the learner has to trust himself to the guidance of a teacher who knows his way about in the subject. And the teacher who knows his way about in the subject is the person who can best lay down the best method of teaching it.

O. B. R.

FOREIGN NOTES

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS.

England. Journal of Education, (London,) March, 1894.

It would seem sometimes as if we could never do anything in England without first getting up a scare. Elementary education had its turn a little while ago; more lately it was naval defence; and now it is the turn of mothers and daughters. In consequence of some letters to the newspapers last autumn, Mrs. Crackanthorpe presented us with a somewhat lurid account of "The Revolt of the Daughters" in the January *Nineteenth Century*. The daughters are determined to have the full liberty of their brothers. They mean to see life—a beautiful euphemism, by the way, for becoming acquainted with the actual and possible depravities of human beings. They clamour for latch-keys, and insist on their right to go to music-halls, to read books which their mothers think undesirable, and generally to knock about town. They look upon their mothers as ignorant, foolish, and tyrannical. And the poor mothers gather in back rooms upstairs, obstinate, narrow-minded, and helpless. They are not wholly wrong, we are told, but they lack sympathy, they are obstinate, and, above all, they are helpless. Poor mothers!